

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 001318

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TAGS: PREL KUNR GM UNSC

SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON UN REFORM

Classified By: POL M/C John Bauman for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (C) Poloff met recently with several German government officials to discuss Germany's current thinking on UN reform.

The Germans continue to insist that they are interested in wide-ranging reform, and point to their active engagement in formulating the EU response to all of SYG Annan's proposals. With regard to Security Council expansion, the Germans still say they believe they have the votes to pass a resolution before the summer that would specify the number of additional countries to be named as permanent members. However, Hansjorg Haber, Director of the Office responsible for Security Council issues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, admitted that, due to the various pressures at work in the General Assembly on this issue, a number of countries' votes could not be predicted with confidence until such a motion is actually considered by the Assembly. Victoria Zimmermann von Siefart, advisor on UN issues at the Chancellery, expressed more concern than she has in the past about possible abstentions on such a motion.

Concerns About China

12. (C) Although many Germans express suspicions about the U.S. undermining the German bid for a permanent seat, officials responsible for UN issues do not voice such concerns. Both Haber and von Siefart say they only hope for "neutrality" from the United States, noting that it is up to Germany and its partners to build strong support for expanding the Council. Haber said the Germans' biggest worry is China, both because of its veto right and its lingering influence in some developing nations. Von Siefart told Poloff that she and National Security Advisor Bernd Muetzelburg were pleased with the tone of their discussions earlier this month in Washington with U/S Burns. She does not interpret comments by the USG about the need for "broad consensus" for expansion to mean "consensus" in the technical sense of the term. Both she and Haber argue that the issue of expansion should and will be resolved by a vote.

German Lobbying

13. (C) Haber said he regrets any impression that German officials are lobbying overly aggressively for the Security Council seat. Regarding alleged German threats to reduce financial support for the UN if their bid fails, Haber said the Germans simply believe that existing multilateral institutions do not give due weight to the importance of countries like India and Brazil. If these countries and the Germans do not receive a place in the Security Council, it may be necessary at some point to create other institutions where the Germans can work multilaterally with such partners.

Financial support for these alternative institutions might reduce the resources that would be available for contributing to the UN.

Support for UNCHR Reform

14. (C) Christina Beinhoff, who is responsible for multilateral human rights issues at the Foreign Ministry, told Poloff that the Germans are lobbying actively within the EU for consensus positions that endorse most of SYG Annan's reform proposals connected with human rights. The Germans support the idea of a smaller body to take up the work currently done by the UNCHR. They are still concerned that it may be difficult to find a mechanism for excluding the worst human rights offenders from such a body, but Beinhoff was "intrigued" by the notion of a code of conduct. The Germans also strongly support a UN peacebuilding capacity and a democracy fund. However, due to German budget constraints, they would want such a fund to be paid for by voluntary contributions rather than dues.

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